

Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)

Description

Question-Answer Relationships (Raphael, 1982, 1986) is a strategy that helps students differentiate among various types of comprehension questions, enabling them to tackle questions more effectively.

The relationship between questions and the source of answers is not always obvious to students. Some questions are based solely on the text students are reading. These text-based questions may be text explicit (“right there”) or text implicit (“think and search”).

- **Right there** questions pick up exact words and phrases from the text. Students should be able to find the answers explicitly stated. These types of questions often begin with words like *Who is*, *Where is*, *When*, *What kind of*, and so on.
- **Think and search** questions are more challenging. Information is available in the text but requires integration of the text material. Students have to think about what they have read, search through a selection, and integrate information for an answer. These questions often include words such as *explain*, *summarize*, *compare*, *contrast*, and *what caused*.

Other types of questions require students to use their own knowledge and/or information from the text.

- **Author and you** questions ask students to synthesize what they already know with new information they have just learned. Students will not find ready-made answers in the text. Instead, they will have to put text information together with applicable prior knowledge.
- **On my own** questions test what students know from sources beyond the text. Students can answer these questions without having read the text by drawing on their own knowledge and experience.

Steps

1. Introduce students to the task demands of different types of questions. Explain the types of question-answer relationships and demonstrate them with examples from a selection the class is reading, progressing from factual recall to questions that test students' critical-thinking skills and background knowledge. Explain how and where to find the answers.
2. Once students have grasped the relationships, give them questions labeled by relationship and have them find the answers.
3. As students become competent, pose questions without labels or direct them to the questions in the text and instruct them to develop answers and decide which question-answer relationship applies.
4. Reinforce as necessary when students might be having difficulty answering questions in the text.

Sources

Raphael, T.E. Question-answering Strategies for Children. *The Reading Teacher*, 36:186–190.
Raphael, T.E. “Teaching Question-Answer Relationships Revisited,” *The Reading Teacher*, 39:516–522.
Tierney, R.J. and Readence, J.E. (2000). *Reading Strategies and Practices: A Compendium*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

General Resources

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